

ACTIVITY: Swimming
CASE: GSAF 1929.12.26
DATE: Thursday December 26, 1929
LOCATION: White Bay near Bald Rock, Sydney Harbour, New South Wales, Australia. 33°52'S, 151°12'E

NAME: William Oakley
DESCRIPTION: He was a 16-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a hot overcast day with thunderstorms, and the air temperature was 81.8°F.

MOON PHASE: Third Quarter, December 23, 1929

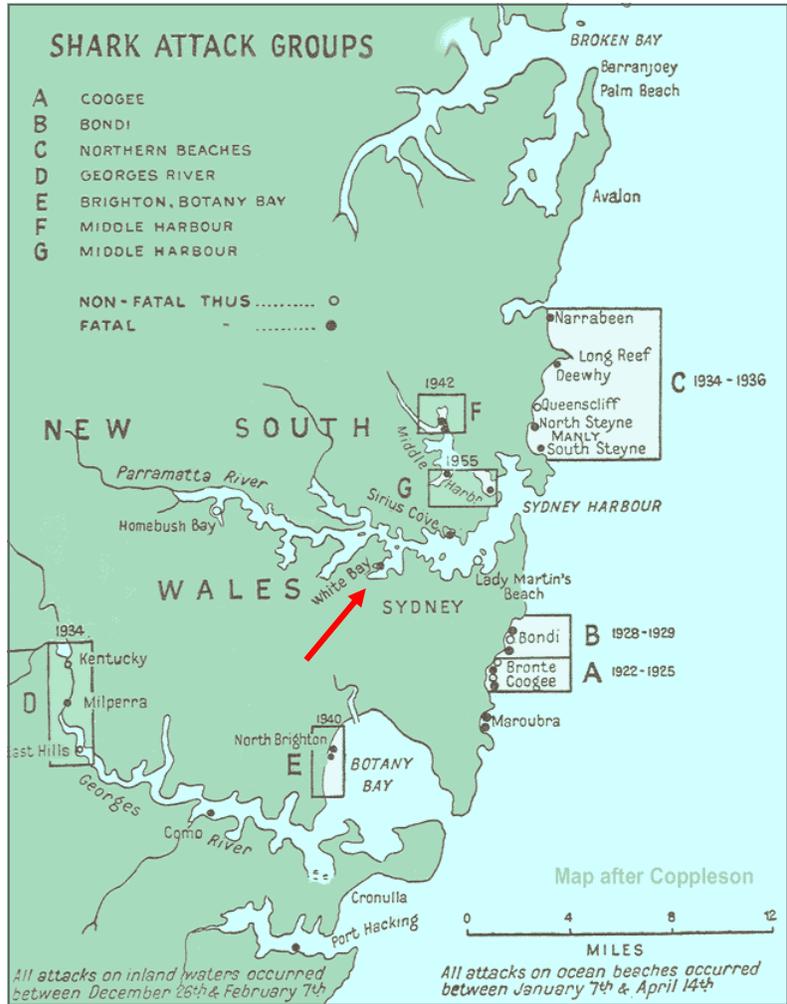
SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was 21.1°C [70°F.]

ENVIRONMENT: White Bay was developed as a working port in the early 20th century after the abattoirs were shifted from adjacent Glebe Island to Homebush.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 20 yards from the wharf.

TIME: Late afternoon

NARRATIVE: It was time for dinner when William Oakley asked 17-year-old John Graham to go in for one last swim, but Graham declined. Oakley dived off the wharf and surfaced shouting, "Shark!" Graham saw "a shadow come from underneath the wharf". The shark attacked him again and again. "It shook him like a rag doll," said Graham. Then it circled the boy repeatedly, snapping at him every few seconds until a motor boat



arrived and pulled him from the water.

INJURY: Fatal. When Oakley was lifted on board the launch it was found that his left arm had been severed above the elbow and there were lacerations to his chest. Graham said "his whole side was bitten." The thumb of his right hand was missing, there were abrasions from the rough hide of the shark, and a jagged wound of the left thigh, extending down to the bone. The boy died on the wharf soon after being rescued.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Tiger shark, according to John Graham.

SOURCES: Northern Territory Times, Tuesday January 7, 1930, page 1
The Canberra Times, Tuesday January 7, 1930, page 4
Rod Hyslop (John Graham's grandson)
Victor M. Coppleson, N3 (1933); Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 232.

KILLED BY SHARK

Adelaide. December 27. 1929.

Mauled by a large shark in White Bay Balmain New South Wales on Thursday William Oakley 16 received shocking injuries and died soon after he was lifted out of the water. The lad put up a gallant fight against the monster which tore off his left arm gashed his thigh bit off the thumb of his right hand and almost disembowelled him.

SHARK TRAGEDY

Coronial Inquiry

SYDNEY, Monday.

The inquest was held to-day concerning the death of William John Oakley, who was mauled by a shark while bathing at Bald Rock Ferry wharf, Balmain.

At the conclusion of the evidence, the coroner found that Oakley died from shock following injuries received when attacked and bitten by a shark.